

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 464. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1877.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

IS HE POPENJOY?

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER II. INTRODUCTORY—NUMBER TWO.

"WHAT ought I to do, papa?" The proposition was in the first instance made to Mary through the dean. Lord George had gone to the father, and the father, with many protestations of personal good-will, had declared that in such a matter he would not attempt to bias his daughter. "That the connection would be personally agreeable to myself, I need hardly say," said the dean. "For myself I have no objection to raise. But I must leave it to Mary. I can only say that you have my permission to address her." But the first appeal to Mary was made by her father himself, and was so made in conformity with his own advice. Lord George, when he left the Deanery, had thus arranged it, but had been hardly conscious that the dean had advised such an arrangement. And it may be confessed between ourselves—between me and my readers, who in these introductory chapters may be supposed to be looking back together over past things—that the dean was from the first determined that Lord George should be his son-in-law. What son-in-law could he find that would redound more to his personal credit, or better advance his personal comfort? As to his daughter, where could a safer husband be found? And then she might in this way become a marchioness! His own father had kept livery stables at Bath. Her other grandfather had been a candle-maker in the Borough. "What ought I to do, papa?" Mary asked, when the proposition was first made to her. She of

course admired the Germans, and appreciated, at perhaps more than its full value, the notice she had received from them. She had thought Lord George to be the handsomest man she had ever seen. She had heard of his love for Miss De Baron, and had felt for him. She was not as yet old enough to know how dull was the house at Manor Cross, or how little of resource she might find in the companionship of such a man as Lord George. Of her own money she knew almost nothing. Nor as yet had her fortune become as a carcase to the birds. And now, should she decide in Lord George's favour, would she be saved at any rate from that danger?

"You must consult your own feelings, my dear," said her father. She looked up to him in blank dismay. She had as yet no feelings.

"But, papa——"

"Of course, my darling, there is a great deal to be said in favour of such a marriage. The man himself is excellent—in all respects excellent. I do not know that there is a young man of higher principles than Lord George in the whole county."

"He is hardly a young man, papa."

"Not a young man! he is thirty. I hope you do not call that old. I doubt whether men in his position of life should ever marry at an earlier age. He is not rich."

"Would that matter?"

"No; I think not. But of that you must judge. Of course, with your fortune you would have a right to expect a richer match. But though he has not money, he has much that money gives. He lives in a large house with noble surroundings. The question is whether you can like him."

"I don't know, papa." Every word she spoke she uttered hesitatingly. When she had asked whether "that would matter," she had hardly known what she was saying. The thing was so important to her, and yet so entirely mysterious and as yet unconsidered, that she could not collect her thoughts sufficiently for proper answers to her father's sensible but not too delicate enquiries. The only ideas that had really struck her were that he was grand and handsome, but very old.

"If you can love him I think you would be happy," said the dean. "Of course you must look at it all round. He will probably live to be the Marquis of Brotherton. From all that I hear I do not think that his brother is likely to marry. In that case you would be the Marchioness of Brotherton, and the property, though not great, would then be handsome. In the meanwhile you would be Lady George Germain, and would live at Manor Cross. I should stipulate on your behalf that you should have a house of your own in town, for, at any rate, a portion of the year. Manor Cross is a fine place, but you would find it dull if you were to remain there always. A married woman, too, should always have some home of her own."

"You want me to do it, papa?"

"Certainly not. I want you to please yourself. If I find that you please yourself by accepting this man, I myself shall be better pleased than if you please yourself by rejecting him; but you shall never know that by my manner. I shall not put you on bread and water, and lock you up in the garret, either if you accept him, or if you reject him." The dean smiled as he said this, as all the world at Brotherton knew that he had never in his life even scolded his daughter.

"And you, papa?"

"I shall come and see you, and you will come and see me. I shall get on well enough. I have always known that you would leave me soon. I am prepared for that." There was something in this which grated on her feelings. She had, perhaps, taught herself to believe that she was indispensable to her father's happiness. Then after a pause he continued: "Of course you must be ready to see Lord George when he comes again, and you ought to remember, my dear, that marquises do not grow on every hedge."

With great care and cunning workmanship one may almost make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but not quite. The care

which Dean Lovelace had bestowed upon the operation in regard to himself had been very great, and the cunning workmanship was to be seen in every plait and every stitch. But still there was something left of the coarseness of the original material. Of all this poor Mary knew nothing at all; but yet she did not like being told of marquises and hedges where her heart was concerned. She had wanted—had unconsciously wanted—some touch of romance from her father to satisfy the condition in which she found herself. But there was no touch of romance there; and when she was left to herself to work the matter out in her own heart and in her own mind she was unsatisfied.

Two or three days after this Mary received notice that her lover was coming. The dean had seen him and had absolutely fixed a time. To poor Mary this seemed to be most unromantic, most unpromising. And though she had thought of nothing else since she had first heard of Lord George's intention, though she had lain awake struggling to make up her mind, she had reached no conclusion. It had become quite clear to her that her father was anxious for the marriage, and there was much in it which recommended it to herself. The old elms of the park of Manor Cross were very tempting. She was not indifferent to being called My Lady. Though she had been slightly hurt when told that marquises did not grow on hedges, still she knew that it would be much to be a marchioness. And the man himself was good, and not only good but very handsome. There was a nobility about him beyond that of his family. Those prone to ridicule might perhaps have called him Werter-faced, but to Mary there was a sublimity in this. But then, was she in love with him?

She was a sweet, innocent, ladylike, high-spirited, joyous creature. Those struggles of her father to get rid of the last porcine taint, though not quite successful as to himself, had succeeded thoroughly in regard to her. It comes at last with due care, and the due care had here been taken. She was so nice that middle-aged men wished themselves younger that they might make love to her, or older that they might be privileged to kiss her. Though keenly anxious for amusement, though over head and ears in love with sport and frolic, no unholy thought had ever polluted her mind. That men were men, and that she was a woman,

had of course been considered by her. Oh, that it might some day be her privilege to love some man with all her heart and all her strength, some man who should be, at any rate to her, the very hero of heroes, the cynosure of her world! It was thus that she considered the matter. There could surely be nothing so glorious as being well in love. And the one to be thus worshipped must of course become her husband. Otherwise would her heart be broken, and perhaps his—and all would be tragedy. But with tragedy she had no sympathy. The loved one must become her husband. But the pictures she had made to herself of him were not at all like Lord George Germain. He was to be fair, with laughing eyes, quick in repartee, always riding well to hounds. She had longed to hunt herself, but her father had objected. He must be sharp enough sometimes to others, though ever soft to her, with a silken moustache and a dimpled chin, and perhaps twenty-four years old. Lord George was dark, his eyes never laughed; he was silent generally, and never went out hunting at all. He was dignified and tall, very handsome, no doubt—and a lord. The grand question was that: could she love him? Could she make another picture, and paint him as her hero? There were doubtless heroic points in the side wave of that coal-black lock—coal-black where the few gray hairs had not yet shown themselves, in his great height, and solemn polished manners.

When her lover came, she could only remember that if she accepted him she would please everybody. The dean had taken occasion to assure her that the ladies at Manor Cross would receive her with open arms. But on this occasion she did not accept him. She was very silent, hardly able to speak a word, and almost sinking out of sight when Lord George endeavoured to press his suit by taking her hand. But she contrived at last to make him the very answer that Adelaide De Baron had made. She must take time to think of it. But the answer came from her in a different spirit. She at any rate knew as soon as it was given that it was her destiny in life to become Lady George Germain. She did not say "Yes" at the moment, only because it is so hard for a girl to tell a man that she will marry him at the first asking! He made his second offer by letter, to which the dean wrote the reply:

"MY DEAR LORD GEORGE,—My daughter

is gratified by your affection, and flattered by your manner of showing it. A few plain words are perhaps the best. She will be happy to receive you as her future husband, whenever it may suit you to come to the Deanery. Yours affectionately,

"HENRY LOVELACE."

Immediately upon this the conduct of Lord George was unexceptionable. He hurried over to Brotherton, and as he clasped the girl in his arms, he told her that he was the happiest man in England. Poor as he was he made her a handsome present, and besought her if she had any mercy, any charity, any love for him, to name an early day. Then came the four ladies from Manor Cross—for Lady Alice had already become Lady Alice Holdenough—and caressed her, and patted her, and petted her, and told her that she should be as welcome as flowers in May. Her father, too, congratulated her with more of enthusiasm, and more also of demonstrated feeling than she had ever before seen him evince. He had been very unwilling, he said, to express any strong opinion of his own. It had always been his desire that his girl should please herself. But now that the thing was settled he could assure her of his thorough satisfaction. It was all that he could have desired; and now he would be ready at any time to lay himself down, and be at rest. Had his girl married a spendthrift lord, even a duke devoted to pleasure and iniquity, it would have broken his heart. But he would now confess that the aristocracy of the country had charms for him; and he was not ashamed to rejoice that his child should be accepted within their pale. Then he brushed a real tear from his eyes, and Mary threw herself into his arms. The tear was real, and in all that he said there was not an insincere word. It was to him a very glory of glories that his child should be in the way of becoming the Marchioness of Brotherton. It was even a great glory that she should be Lady George Germain. The dean never forgot the livery stable, and owned day and night that God had been very good to him.

It was soon settled that Mary was to be allowed three months for preparation, and that the marriage was to be solemnised in June. Of course she had much to do in preparing her wedding garments, but she had before her a much more difficult task than that, at which she worked most sedulously. It was now the great business of

her life to fall in love with Lord George. She must get rid of that fair young man with the silky moustache and the darling dimple. The fallow, the sublime, and the Werter-faced must be made to take the place of laughing eyes and pink cheeks. She did work very hard, and sometimes, as she thought, successfully. She came to a positive conclusion that he was the handsomest man she ever saw, and that she certainly liked the few gray hairs. That his manner was thoroughly noble no one could doubt. If he were seen merely walking down the street he would surely be taken for a great man. He was one of whom, as her husband, she could be always proud, and that she felt to be a great thing. That he would not play lawn-tennis, and that he did not care for riding, were points in his character to be regretted. Indeed, though she made some tenderly cautious enquiries, she could not find what were his amusements. She herself was passionately fond of dancing, but he certainly did not dance. He talked to her, when he did talk, chiefly of his family, of his own poverty, of the goodness of his mother and sisters, and of the great regret which they all felt that they should have been deserted by the head of their family.

"He has now been away," said Lord George, "for ten years; but not improbably he may return soon, and then we shall have to leave Manor Cross."

"Leave Manor Cross?"

"Of course we must do so should he come home. The place belongs to him, and we are only there because it has not suited him to reside in England."

This he said with the utmost solemnity, and the statement had been produced by the answer which the Marquis had made to a letter announcing to him his brother's marriage. The Marquis had never been a good correspondent. To the ladies of the house he never wrote at all, though Lady Sarah favoured him with a periodical quarterly letter. To his agent, and less frequently to his brother, he would write curt questions on business, never covering more than one side of a sheet of notepaper, and always signed "Yours, B." To these the inmates of Manor Cross had now become accustomed, and little was thought of them; but on this occasion he had written three or four complete sentences, which had been intended to have, and which did have, a plain meaning. He congratulated his brother, but begged

Lord George to bear in mind that he himself might not improbably want Manor Cross for his own purpose before long. If Lord George thought it would be agreeable, Mr. Knox, the agent, might have instructions to buy Miss Lovelace a present. Of this latter offer Lord George took no notice; but the intimation concerning the house sat gravely on his mind.

The dean did exactly as he had said with reference to the house in town. Of course it was necessary that there should be arrangements as to money between him and Lord George, in which he was very frank. Mary's money was all her own—giving her an income of nearly one thousand five hundred pounds per annum. The dean was quite of opinion that this should be left to Lord George's management, but he thought it right, as Mary's father, to stipulate that his daughter should have a home of her own. Then he suggested a small house in town, and expressed an opinion that his daughter should be allowed to live there six months in the year. The expense of such a sojourn might be in some degree shared by himself if Lord George would receive him for a month or so in the spring. And so the thing was settled, Lord George pledging himself that the house should be taken. The arrangement was distasteful to him in many ways, but it did not seem to him to be unreasonable, and he could not oppose it. Then came the letter from the Marquis. Lord George did not consider himself bound to speak of that letter to the dean; but he communicated the threat to Mary. Mary thought nothing about it, except that her future brother-in-law must be a very strange man.

During all these three months she strove very hard to be in love, and sometimes she thought that she had succeeded. In her little way, she studied the man's character, and did all she could to ingratiate herself with him. Walking seemed to be his chief relaxation, and she was always ready to walk with him. She tried to make herself believe that he was profoundly wise. And then, when she failed in other things, she fell back upon his beauty. Certainly she had never seen a handsomer face, either on a man's shoulders or in a picture. And so they were married.

Now I have finished my introduction—having married my heroine to my hero—and have, I hope, instructed my reader as to those hundred and twenty incidents, of which I spoke—not too tediously. If he

will go⁶ back and examine, he will find that they are all there. But perhaps it will be better for us both that he should be in quiet possession of them without any such examination.

A DAY AT BOULOGNE.*

THERE used to be a farce with this title that was highly popular in the days of our grandfathers, and which, no doubt, owed its attractions to the peculiar relations then existing between the town and perfidious Albion, significant of which was the title borne by the debtors' prison, viz. the "English Hotel." Those pleasant times of asylum and economy are gone, and it is now nearly as dear as any other watering-place—except, possibly, that hunting-ground of harpies, Ostend. At the modern Boulogne I lately spent a day, being in London at a quarter to eight A.M.; at Boulogne, or Boolong (to speak so as to be intelligible by porters and sailors) a little after noon, and in London again the next morning. The pleasure was of the most simple kind and of an innocent measure, that would have gratified the excellent Dr. Barbauld. In the boat I noted a strange being, whose dress suggested one of the gaudy beetles one sees in museums impaled upon a pin; for it consisted of a highly effective suit, the pattern of which ran in bars across his back. I had no difficulty in recognising an acquaintance who was typically, if not actually, the same as my old friend 'Arry,† whom I had once before seen on his travels. There is a perfectly appropriate relation between the place to which we are hurrying and travellers in beetle-backed garments. Boolong would be incomplete without its 'Arrys. I took delight in talking with him, for there is an artlessness in these creatures, and he told me all his plans with a candour as unsolicited as it was welcome. He beguiled me on the way with his personal narrative, in which "the governor" and "the shop" occupied a large and recurring share. These terms were, however, provokingly figurative; and I could not make out whether the first referred to the worthy being who was responsible for his coming into the world, and being enabled to bear such effective garments; or whether "shop" stood for

a place of counters and goods, or was a gay description of a bachelor residence. I did not like to press him on the point, as your 'Arrys are sensitive. At Boolong, however, he mysteriously disappeared.

The town of Boolong-Sir-Mair has ever an air of gaiety—there is a colour and glitter. Assuredly the French have some mode of invariably making their ports picturesque. No sooner is the basin formed, than the houses begin to range themselves up in an effective manner—something like the scenes in an opera. Gay boards and invitations adorn the streets, and plenty of fishing costumes appear in the foreground. Besides being gay and glittering, Boulogne has a substantial and prosperous air, which many an English town of the same importance lacks. The hotels—as, indeed, have most foreign hotels—have an appetising and festive air, owing to the inviting court and orange-trees, and the glimpses of the tables d'hôte in the long white "eating-room." Nothing can be more cheerful or exhilarating than this entry into a gay foreign hotel, or even the little courtesies and attentions of a simulated welcome—the ringing of bells, the host and his various officials pouring out of the little glass doors and transparent cases, and the first glance at the gay bedrooms.

It has always seemed to me that, for a watering-place, Boulogne is amazingly weak in its sea. The mighty ocean, as it were, seems to "cut the place," hurrying on to Dieppe and Ostend, where it can tumble along in magnificent breakers. In truth, the accommodation for its reception is but of a scrubby kind, though there is an "Establishment," and a fair attempt at bathing-boxes. The former is a pretentious and solid affair enough, and suggests its vis-à-vis at Dover—the Lord Warden Hotel; but it seems rather a depressing place. No; Boulogne is an inland town, with its churches and its "Grand Street" up the hill, its glittering shops, its dainty fish-women, and its mixture of English—gentle and Cockney. This is what offers the true charm.

It was a sultry Sunday—one nearest to the Festival of the Assumption, and the great gala of the year. The town was full. From the railway-station might have been noted the great dome capping the neighbouring hill, which is the church of our Lady of Boulogne, which a simple and untiring priest reared with no other assistants than his own energy, faith, and piety.

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 13, p. 416, "A Day in Calais."

† Ibid., p. 617, "Harry."

This wonderful structure, which is of enormous dimensions, and is enriched inside with paintings and decorations of every kind, is dedicated to the patroness of the fishermen and fishwomen; and this was the fête-day. They are a pious race, and nearly every fishing-port has its gigantic crucifix looking out far over the waters; and, as the boats return or go out to sea in storms, Jacques or Pierre commends himself and his venture in a short prayer to the protection of our Lord.

In the great street, between four and five o'clock, the crowd begins to cluster, and three or four rows of chairs are brought out and cover the pathways. The delay is long, but everyone is patient; and at last the head of this wonderful procession, which takes over an hour to go by, comes in sight. The sun shines out brilliantly, and co-operates to his very best. The invariable "sapper-pumpers," like Dr. Johnson's leg of mutton, ever ill-kept, ill-dressed, and apparently ill-fed, but indispensable creatures, led the way; and then came the endless flights of young girls, in white tulle and wreaths, gliding by up the hill, all graceful and very many pretty. Sometimes, a couple carried a statue on a sort of two-armed stand on their shoulders in a not ungraceful way; while others bore gay banners, which became centres from which fluttered ribbons, which were also held on each side by others. A number of rural parishes round Boulogne had sent their contingents, each led by the imperishable "Swiss," in various uniforms; one in scarlet and gold of surpassing magnificence and proportions. I note, by-the-way, that in the south of France this gaudy functionary gives place to a sort of chamberlain-looking personage, sober in dress, with a silver chain, and more like an English "verger clad." The variety of schools and dresses, "children of Mary;" the "English young ladies," who held their own very fairly; the nuns; the brothers; and the picturesque acolytes, in scarlet and lace and their little scarlet skull-caps;—made up a gay scene of innumerable colours, and one well worthy of Mr. Frith's brush. Towards the end of the procession came the silver figure of the Blessed Virgin, in a silver ship, carried by sailors of the state, or navy, as we should say. But the most picturesque incident was the fishwomen in their full panoply—those charming fishwomen, who all looked well and even handsome, their grave, composed

faces set off by the most becoming of frilled caps, with gold ornaments, richer Indian capes, and black and scarlet petticoats—all of a fineness that any lady in the land would not have disdained. In the procession were a band of old fishing-dames, in scarlet petticoats, and Indian handkerchiefs bound round their heads; and there were even little miniature fishwomen of ten years old in the same effective dress. At a long interval, when the procession had passed out of sight, came the Bishop of Arras, with his mitre and crozier glittering in the sun, and making but a slow and toilsome progress up the hill, attended by four of that admirable body who, in England, are styled "John Darms." No wonder that he moved slowly, as at every step there was a bright fishwoman starting up, and darting out to hold up her baby to receive a blessing. So our bishop had hard work of it. The spectacle had something very pastoral and pleasing in it.

While I was thus engaged I suddenly caught sight of my beetle-backed acquaintance, standing in a conspicuous place, staring, as the phrase goes, with all his eyes; but I soon saw what was in his little soul. He was intent on fascinating some of the "gurls" by his remarkable raiment, and I am not sure that he did not succeed in, at least, attracting their notice. I was afraid of his compromising me by a greeting, so I discreetly shifted my position, and viewed the rest of the procession from another place.

There is something curious in dining in France one day and dining the preceding and succeeding days in England. The table d'hôte is a sudden and agreeable change. The French voices, the good dishes, the "forty feeding like one," and the one waiter attending like forty. Indeed, I have seen this prodigy of one waiter attending thirty people, and attending efficiently, though a long table d'hôte. After the dinner there was the pretty theatre, with the opera, *Les Dragons de Villars*, or the horsemanship on the quays, where we were entertained with purely English clowns, whose buffoonings were truly Flemish and gross. The artist, however, who played the fiddle with his toes, working the strings with his right foot and holding the bow with the left, carried off all the honours.

I suppose it was fully three months afterwards, when—may I make the confession without shocking a too refined reader?—as I was seated in an omnibus,

not making the excuse that there was no cab, the rain coming suddenly on, but simply because I occasionally ride in such vehicles; when someone seemed to take a sort of liberty in stooping across and nudging me, saying at the same time; "You reckhurlect that 'ere Sunday!"

There was nothing zebra or beetle-like in his clothes, but his voice, rather than face, came back upon me.

"Oh," I said, "to be sure—Boulogne."

"Yes, Boolong," he repeated. "Oh, it's been the making of me. Tip-top place. Wish I was there now."

"Then, you enjoyed yourself?"

"Enjoyed myself! That's not the word. It was rare. Bless you, I'm no more the same person, the gov'nor says. What I say is, if you have anyone that wants polishing, send 'em over to Boolong. Look at me!"

We had a long ride before us, so I encouraged his garrulity.

"Tell me," I said, "your adventures;" and so he did, to the following effect:

"Well, I think that we have a great deal to learn from the foreigner; and as such I used to speak of him, and to him, as mussoo and munseer, and the like. I now own that my eyes are opened, since I have been at Boolong. It is a delightful place, and the natives—Mess-yer Lay Frawnsay, I mean—are worthy, agreeable folks. Another delusion, by-the-way, exploded. We don't know how to pronounce the Frawnsay; we have a jargon of our own and father it on them. Now no Frenchman says munseer, as I was taught to say, but moose-your, or 'yer.' Bless yer, I have a nice ear for this sort of thing.

"What I like at a gay place like Boolong, is the easy cordial footing on which a fellow is at once established—that is, if he knows how to behave. They are the nicest people in the world, as I found at the Dwan, Th' Hôtel de Dwan. Bless you! the very first day—and I must tell you I was prejudiced against the Dwan at first, as it was up a sort of stable lane, the walls a raw yal—yellow, I mean, and the—may I say—smell, beyond belief. But bless you, as I was saying, the very first day—lur premyer mo-mon—I was dazeillusion-honeyed. Le Pay, our landlord, whom I had a long chat with every morning, regular, and who, whenever I went in or went out of the koor, took off his hat to me, brought me in to the Tarble dirt. And mark that distinction, for you perpetually hear your

vulgar English talking with an air of the Tarble doat, whereas, you must avoid these full hard sounds, and soften off, sir. 'Dirt' is not it exactly, I know, but it comes very near it if said in a sharp off-hand way—'tarble dirt.' I suppose about twenty people all got in somehow into this gay little room, no larger than a small shop, the two ends of the white tables sticking into the windows. Oh, I so like the ways and habits of the French. Thus, when I sat down, a crisp gentleman said pleasantly—to put me at my ease, you see—'Come by the London boat, sir? Le Pay says it was late.' I saw the ladies at each side listening, so I told all I knew, and in ten minutes I was perfectly shay m'war. And this I noticed during my stay at Boolong, that we were all so affable and in good spirits, especially coming in in full dress, you know; ladies in ribbons and best caps, the gurls, smart as on a Sunday; and no corking up or fixing you with a stare, as if you were something low, you know, but a sort of freedom, and even a leanin' to flirtation. Bless you, I used to come out, I know, in a style which I never did on this side of the water. But some way you don't meet such nice people. There were two gurls—the Miss Pickfords—no relation to the great van people, for I asked them. I didn't know which I liked the best—Lewheeze, the eldest, or Adale, the second. They were always laughing, and I used to sit with them in the koor laughing and chaffing, and, in fact, saying anything that came into my head. The elders never troubled us, and indeed, I used to attend my fair charmers to the Ban—not Bang, as you so commonly hear. One of the gurls described the life as the 'far knee aunty;' on which, to give an idea of the flow of spirits of the place, I said on the spur of the moment, that I liked the 'near knee, aunty.' And would you believe it, at the Tarble dirt old Mr. Pickford began to allude to it, so that the gurls must have told it upstairs, and Mrs. P. said she was beginning to be afraid of me, as she heard I was quite a wit. I never met nicer people. Certainly the French have the art of society. By-and-by I knew everybody in the Dwan. It seems to be now like a dream every morning coming down to breakfast, and we so delighted to see each other. I always shook hands with Adale—she was my one, you will have guessed—and old Pickford was so nice in his blue tie and white waistcoat, and Mrs. Pickford, a plain woman enough,

but so kind and interested. I liked Pay himself, and Mrs. Pay, who had manners a countess might have envied, and was so studiously respectful to Mr. 'Peekfor.' I said she ought to be called 'Pay-day,' as she made out the bills, and Adale insisted on telling this to papa, who I thought would have split—I mean with laughing. He told it across the table—and would you imagine my 'error!'—to Madame Pay herself. But it made not the least difference in her demeanour to me, though of course I made the almond honorable in her case. As to dressing, you could dress any way; indeed, the more any way the better.

"Now I could tell you a good thing about that. By a sort of providence, I had put up among my other traps, really not thinking it of any importance, a little cap, made up of blue and white triangles alternately, something after the fashion of a racing-cap. This I had on one morning at my room door, when old Pickford said, 'Halloo, what a stunning cap!' As usual, it soon travelled—the allusion, I mean—through the family, and the gurls insisted on seeing it. Its popularity was at once settled, with the result that I ever after attended them in it to the 'Establishment'—you know I mean what they call the 'Eattableesemung'—too foreign a word. What a happy family we were! I know I could have walked and walked up the Grawn Roo, and down the Grawn Roo, looking in at the shops in the Le Kew, or down again to the Paw, always attending Adale and Lewheeze. Yet the Paw always made me sad; for did not the London boat depart from the Paw?—and by the London boat I must return to the place from whence I came. For funds were getting low, and it was nigh the end of the week, and Pay was charging at the rate of wheat frawn a day—moderate they said, but it seemed a large sum. But then you had varng cumpree, to the amount of a demmy bootile. We fared like fighting-cocks. Each day was like a swell set-out dinner—your potarge; your fish; your ontrays; your pullar, and your humar, and your be-shamels—so called, I said, because they had the 'besht smells' of the whole. The convulsions this threw the whole table into! Then there was always cheese given, because old Pickford asked for it, and we said it was charming in the Pays, who made no extra charge: as they said 'Snay reean!' But still wheat frawn a day,

even Too cumpree, was heavy. I was so happy among these French people, I must contrive to pull it in some other way. Besides, at other houses, such as the Nor, they were charging Kangs and even says frawn a day, and in case of a private sallun, it ran up to van frawn.

"You should have seen us in the drawing-room of an evening, which was really our own room; Madame Pay always making it understood that the 'can her pay' was reserved for Mrs. Pickford—her footstool, 'come pree?' But alas! all this was too splendid to last. And most unfortunately, just at the end, everything was spoiled when I ventured on this little joke—Mrs. Pickford is like a Scotch-woman—and said, with a half-conscious smile, 'She canna' pay.' 'How do you mean, sir?' said old Mr. Pickford gravely. 'What do you mean?' The gurls got red, I noticed. I had hurt them. 'You don't mean it,' said Adale, 'but it was unkind.' 'It was only my fun,' I said. 'I hope so. But papa is seriously angry, you know, he loves mamma so.' I was abject in my apologies, but old Pickford looked at me now always in a very hostile way. He even was snappish, and when I said something as to these 'dear good Pays,' who seemed 'to me like a father and mother,' he said that they were impudent, forward cheats, and that he thought that he would have to leave them. But the strangest of all, I noticed, was the alteration in the good Pays. There was a glass Bewrow in his garden, where bills were paid—the proper word is 'case'—and that very evening, coming down in the blue-and-white cap, I heard the most excited language proceeding from the case and from the two good Pays—both speaking excellent English—assailing Mrs. Pickford. Now, hitherto he had always answered the Pickfords and other guests in a French, corresponding to that in which he was addressed—a kind of broken tongue by which we made ourselves understood. How, I don't know; but he had certainly always answered me respectfully, in a way that showed he understood. Now, I did not speak French well, or, at least, so well as I do now; and certainly it was painful to hear old Pickford's wretched attempts as a linguist. Yet Pay always answered him gravely; and here was Pay gesticulating, and thumping, and spitting! such a change! and madame almost screaming.

"But I could not learn the meaning of all this, for alas! here I had to go by the

London boat. It was Friday, and she sailed at midnight. Indeed, the London boat was always fond of going at three or four in the morning, or some such unearthly hour. 'Why not go by the express?' said Adale, again and again. 'You do not want for money.'

"We were having a farewell walk, when all was made up.

"No," I said valiantly, 'I am first-class in that way. You must come and see me in London. It has been a very pleasant time. Oh, I said pleasant—that's not the word; Hurroo—that's what I've been.' She started for a second but understood. Then she looked round hurriedly. 'May I trust you with a little secret? Pay has been cruelly insolent to papa, and papa says he will not stop another day with him; but he has him in his power.' 'Who?' I said, 'he or Pay?' 'Well, papa thought you knew this, and were joking on his position. But on Thursday our agent is sending the remittances. Now, if I were you, I'd go to papa—of myself—and I think, if anything would remove the rather bitter feeling he has, it would be that you offered, until Thursday, to——' 'But I have no money,' I said, 'I assure you, after paying Pay.' She did not laugh at the joke—odd, wasn't it?—'I shall have but one and sixpence left to bring me from St. Katharine's-wharf. But I've spent a most happy week, and I shall never, never forget Pay's.' Someway, I was always alluding to this. 'Well, tell papa that you will write; you will be there to-morrow, and we will have it on Monday.' 'I'll not let a minute pass without writing.' 'But I mean about Pay,' she said pettishly. 'Or, wait,' she went on, eagerly, 'write to me! Papa need know nothing.' Nice and delicate of Adale; but I liked her too well not to be frank. 'I am quite run out, you see. I have been so extravagant here, and Boolong is a dear place; so I shall have to pull in ever so long to make up.' She turned from me with contempt, I really think.

"I confess we had rather a dismal dinner, and, after a farewell, I set out at midnight by my London boat. On paying my bill to Pay he spoke of my friends, and said they were a lot of 'Scrokes.' What on earth did he mean? No matter, I spent a most delightful time, and I say again, that there is nothing like French society."

Such was 'Arry's story. And the omnibus presently stopped, when he got

down and parted from me with the renewed assurance, that "if I knew anyone that wanted polishing, I need only send 'em to Boolong."

CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

It is astonishing how little interest is taken in Chelsea Hospital, or the Royal Hospital at Chelsea as it is officially called. Yet that home for old soldiers has a curious origin and history, and a visit to it strongly stimulates the memory and imagination. It is a popular article of belief that pretty, witty, graceless Nell Gwynne to some extent atoned for an ill-spent life by inducing her royal lover to found this asylum for decayed warriors. It is no less firmly credited that the institution is maintained by the liberality of the State. We shall see that on both points the public has been misinformed.

In the parliamentary session beginning 19th November, 1592, and ending 10th April, 1593, was passed the first statute giving a legal provision to disabled soldiers. This Act directed that rates should be levied in parishes, out of which the justices in quarter sessions should grant to soldiers and marines who were disabled by wounds or sickness rates not exceeding ten pounds a year to a private soldier, fifteen pounds to one who had borne office under the rank of lieutenant, and twenty pounds to any who had served as lieutenant. This Act was often evaded, and another with the same object, passed in 1597, was not much more effectual. A great step in advance was, however, taken in 1648, when parliament ordered certain sums to be appropriated from the sequestrations and the excise, for the maintenance of maimed soldiers. In 1681, Sir Stephen Fox, the first paymaster-general of the forces, conceived the idea of Chelsea Hospital, and induced the king to take steps to accomplish the object. There is not one tittle of evidence to show that Nell Gwynne had anything to do with the matter. She was not even one of the subscribers to the fund. It was hoped that the public would have contributed largely, but in addition to one thousand three hundred pounds from Sir Stephen Fox and one thousand pounds from Tobias Rustal, a former page of the back stairs, only two thousand three hundred and forty-seven pounds was thus raised. The king added six thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven pounds four shillings

and twopence-halfpenny, the unapplied balance of secret service money. It was sought to make use of the bishops as agents to collect subscriptions; but as the Archbishop of York sensibly observed, "we can neither follow lords and gentlemen to their houses, nor summon them to meet us." Consequently this device for raising funds failed. It was therefore resolved to obtain money from the troops themselves, in the following ingenious but somewhat mean manner. Sir Stephen Fox, on assuming office in 1661, found that it was the practice to issue pay to the troops long after it had become due. This was a great hardship, and Sir Stephen arranged that a portion of the pay under the head of subsistence should be issued weekly, and the balance after the next muster. In return for this accommodation he deducted twelvecence in the pound from the pay, and appropriated the proceeds to his own benefit. This system found great favour with the army, but it became necessary to abandon it eighteen years later on account of the difficulties of the revenue. The king then issued a royal warrant in which it was laid down that the muster rolls should be completely paid off before the end of the succeeding winter, and that in return for such regularity of payment the deduction of twelvecence in the pound should be continued. In May, 1683, letters of privy seal directed that one-third of this poundage, with retrospective action to the 1st January, 1681, should be devoted to Chelsea Hospital. In 1684 it was ordered that a day's pay should be deducted annually from every officer's and soldier's pay, to be applied to the same purpose. In 1686 a second third of the poundage was assigned to the hospital, and a little later the whole of the poundage—after deducting the expenses of the paymaster-general, and the commissary-general of musters, and the exchequer fees—was handed over to the hospital. In 1692 half-pay officers were required to contribute sixpence in the pound from their pay, and in 1715 officers on retired full pay were compelled to submit to a deduction of twelvecence in the pound. In 1685 James the Second assigned one hundred chaldrons of coal, being the rent of the castle of Newcastle leased to the corporation. Warrants issued, one in 1684 and another in 1711, directed that when officers sold their commissions, both buyer and seller should pay twelvecence in the pound for the use of Chelsea Hos-

pital. Each of these warrants appear to have been in force only a few months. In 1754 twelvecence in the pound from the money paid in army out-pensions was ordered to be assigned to Chelsea Hospital. In 1833 this poundage was reduced by half, and in 1847 ceased altogether. Between 1792 and 1847 unclaimed prize money to the amount of five hundred and seventy-eight thousand seven hundred and thirty-nine pounds thirteen shillings and fivepence was handed over to Chelsea Hospital. Poundage of twelvecence from daily pay ceased in 1831, on retired, full, or half pay in 1783. The deduction of one day's pay in a year came to an end in 1831. The contributions, legacies, rents of land, value of coals from Newcastle, &c., amounted in 1846-47 to sixty-two thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight pounds thirteen shillings and one penny. The votes from the exchequer, i.e. the contributions from the State, had by 1846-47 reached the amount of fifty millions one hundred and forty-seven thousand and twenty-eight pounds thirteen shillings and threepence; but against this must be set the payment to out-pensioners of fifty-one millions five hundred and seventy-six thousand and thirty-five pounds nine shillings and twopence.

It will therefore be apparent that Chelsea Hospital has been entirely supported by the army, and owes nothing whatever to the liberality of the State. The late chaplain-general, in his Traditions of Chelsea College, justly observes: "Within the walls of Chelsea Hospital the veteran has indeed nothing to complain of, but why? Because the establishment is his own, built by his own or his predecessors' money, supported out of funds which the nation never gave . . . The in-pensioner, therefore, though he has no complaint to make, owes nothing to the generosity of the House of Commons."

Chelsea Hospital was originally called Chelsea College. The lands about Chelsea and Battersea were formerly church property, belonging to the abbot of Westminster. At the Reformation all but a small portion passed into the hands of private owners. On a part of the reserved land James the First resolved to build a college for the study of polemical divinity. The building was begun, but after a short time progress was stopped for want of funds. Under the Commonwealth Chelsea College was used as a place of confinement for political offenders and

prisoners of war. A few years after the Restoration the building and adjoining lands were granted to the Royal Society. In 1681 the latter sold this grant to the king, who handed it over to Sir Stephen Fox that a hospital for disabled soldiers might be constructed. Nevertheless the term "college" is that by which it is generally known both by the pensioners and the neighbours. The first stone of the new building was laid by the king on the 17th February, 1682, and the work had made, on the 1st April, 1692, sufficient progress to allow of the admission of the first batch of pensioners. A few days earlier the first commissioners were appointed, and among them was the celebrated architect, Sir Christopher Wren. At that time Chelsea town was quite in the country, and so many robberies took place for many years after on the secluded road leading to London that, in 1715, it was ordered that a guard of in-pensioners should patrol between Chelsea and St. James's Palace from nightfall up to midnight. This practice lasted till as late as 1805.

The most interesting part of the building is the great hall. Here, in 1808, General Whitelocke was tried for his conduct at Buenos Ayres. Here, in the November of the same year, was examined Major-General the Hon. Sir Arthur Wellesley, by the court of enquiry on the convention of Cintra; and here, fifty-four years later, lay in state the remains of the same Sir Arthur, who had, within six years from the date of his examination, risen to the rank of duke and field-marshal, and had obtained the insignia of most of the knightly orders in Europe. Formerly, the room was used as a dining-hall. When we visited it, we found the old pensioners smoking, playing at games, and reading newspapers or periodicals. The old men, indeed, looked like members of a soldiers' Senior United Service Club. Both chapel and hall are hung with captured standards. In the hall are to be seen the remains of French colours captured in Marlborough's wars, together with other trophies of a similar description. The extensive and pretty grounds are, with the exception of a portion reserved for the officers of the institution, thrown open to the public. On the day of our visit, the weather was fine, and the veterans might be seen strolling about the garden, or seated in slow and solemn meditation on the numerous benches. In one corner is the kitchen-garden, in which plots are

assigned to those pensioners who care for cultivating them. A part of the grounds was formerly included in the estates of Richard, Earl of Ranelagh, who died in 1712. Some years after his death, the portion alluded to was let to Lacey, patentee of Drury-lane Theatre. He projected and eventually carried out a plan of constructing public gardens, which were well known in the last century under the name of Ranelagh and the Rotunda. In 1803, a splendid entertainment was given by the Knights of the Bath to celebrate the Peace of Amiens. The late Sir Alexander Woodford, governor of the hospital, who died in 1872, used to relate that, as a young officer of the Guards, he had been present at this fête. The place, for some unaccountable reason, went out of fashion immediately after this entertainment, and it was closed in July, 1803. When we visited the gardens the other day, one of the iron hooks by which lamps were, on the occasion of fêtes, suspended from the trees, was pointed out to us. Going inside the building, we were shown over one of the wards or galleries. These are long, lofty, airy apartments, with the inner half—i.e. the half farthest from the windows—divided into what may be termed cabins. These cabins contain the bed of the occupant and a little furniture. Some of them had the door opening into the gallery unclosed, and we could see that the walls were all hung round with photographs and coloured prints. Very cheerful and snug they looked.

In the gallery the men take their meals in messes of about twelve each. The pensioners in the lower wards being very infirm, orderlies are paid to bring them up their breakfast and dinner. The tea is made in the wards themselves. The rations are good, ample, and afford satisfaction. Each man receives daily one pound of bread, one ounce of butter, a quarter of a pint of the best new milk; with three-quarters of an ounce of cocoa, and one ounce of moist sugar, for breakfast, and one-sixth of an ounce of tea, and three-quarters of an ounce of moist sugar, for tea. For dinner, each man has, on Sunday, thirteen ounces of beef, one pound of potatoes, and plum pudding. On Wednesdays, he gets ten ounces of bacon, and one pound of cabbage or other vegetable. On the other five days he obtains thirteen ounces of mutton, one pound of potatoes, and one-and-a-half ounce of Scotch barley. A sufficient quantity of herbs, oatmeal, salt, pepper, and mustard is supplied. On

Fridays, half-a-pound of cheese is served out, and every day a pint of porter. On the Queen's and Prince of Wales' birthdays, the restoration of Charles the Second, and Christmas-day, eighteen ounces of best roasting beef is given instead of the ordinary ration of meat.

A pensioner's friends, male or female, are allowed to pay him visits in the ward. Indeed, everything is done to make the old men as comfortable as possible, and to impose no more restraint than is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of good order. There is very little duty; in fact, the only obligatory duty is sentry work. There are two sentries, but these only mount guard by day, and when relieved go to their own rooms, instead of a guard-room. Night duty is performed by in-pensioners, three to each gate, who are paid extra for acting as watchmen. The pensioners need have no dread of cold. There is a reasonable supply of coal, and the four lower wards are further warmed by coke stoves. The clothing is warm and sufficient. On great occasions, and at full-dress parades, the three-cornered cocked hats, which date, we should imagine, from the days of Marlborough, are worn; at other times, a forage-cap. There is very little crime, and the offenders are leniently dealt with. Almost the only punishment is confinement to the college for a few days, or, in aggravated cases, expulsion.

The general air of the pensioners was one of grave but rather feeble contentment. When we visited Chelsea, we spoke to several of the men, and as far as we could ascertain, the only complaint was, that those who gave up a large out-pension received no larger amount of pay than those who had surrendered a comparatively small pension. The complaint is, however, scarcely well-founded, for there are different classes with different rates of pay, and those belonging to the higher classes are generally the men who previously enjoyed the largest out-pension. The number of in-pensioners is five hundred and thirty-eight. Of these, six are colour-sergeants, at tenpence a day; twenty-four sergeants, at eightpence; twenty-four corporals, at fourpence; six drummers, at threepence; fifty privates, at twopence; fifty ditto, at three halfpence; three hundred and seventy-eight ditto, at one penny. Besides this pay, a certain number of pensioners receive allowances for the voluntary performance of extra duties. For instance, six cooks get one

shilling a day, and twenty-five ward orderlies at half-a-crown a week.

What we were much struck with was, the few men who were minus an arm or a leg. Only about eight are thus maimed, but a large proportion are terribly broken-down from age, disease, or wounds. From a return dated 6th March, 1870, it appears that there were ninety-two men in the infirmary, and two hundred and eighty-five out-patients, requiring more or less constant medical attention. Nothing can exceed the care bestowed upon the inmates of the infirmary, who receive the most liberal diet, and are tenderly nursed. How well the pensioners are looked after may be judged from returns, which show that, though during the fourteen years ending 31st December, 1869, the average age on admission was sixty-one years and ten months, the average age at death was seventy-one years and two months. In that time there were, out of one thousand one hundred and nine deaths, one hundred and thirty-seven from eighty to eighty-four inclusive; forty-eight between eighty-five and eighty-nine; four at ninety; two at ninety-two; one at ninety-four; one at ninety-five; one at one hundred, and one at one hundred and eight. We are not told when the man one hundred and eight years old died, but assuming that his death took place in 1862, what a wonderfully far-stretching link he was with the past! Entering the army say at eighteen in 1772, he may have fought at Bunker's-hill, and in a casual visit to Chelsea, have conversed with men who took part in the wars of William the Third. His active career terminated probably before the struggle in the Peninsula began, and his memory was no doubt stored with barrack-room traditions of Fontenoy, Dettingen, Minden, and Culloden. During the same fourteen years, the average yearly number of men dismissed was seven; men sent to lunatic asylums, one and five-sevenths; and of those who left the hospital at their own request, twenty-nine. We may mention that pensioners frequently return to the hospital after having left it. When we paid our visit, there was one old man, ninety-two years of age, McKay by name; he was a native of Sutherlandshire, had served in the Peninsula, and at Waterloo in the Black Watch. He had been wounded in the face at Badajos, and in the hand at Waterloo. At Badajos, he told us, he had seen a man hanged for stealing vegetables. Quite lively and alert was the old fellow,

able to walk about the garden, and in full possession of his mental faculties. There was another man, bed-ridden, a year older, but little information was to be got out of him. In the now closed and disused burial-ground of the hospital, an inscription states, that William Hiesland died on the 17th February, 1732, aged one hundred and twelve years, and that when one hundred, he married! He must have been among the first admitted into the hospital, and if his age is correctly given, it is possible that he took part in the Civil War between Charles the First and his Parliament.

When Greenwich was disestablished, there was some thought of subjecting Chelsea to the same treatment. Fortunately, the idea was abandoned. The average amount of out-pension surrendered was, up to 1870, about tenpence, the rate ranging from fivepence to two shillings and elevenpence-halfpenny. Deducting the surrendered pension, the average cost of an in-pensioner is about two shillings and threepence a day, but it is very certain that the average care and comfort enjoyed by each pensioner would not be obtained for less than double that amount. In fact, under scarcely any circumstances could a pensioner be so well looked after outside, as inside the hospital. A good deal of evidence was taken on this subject, and some of the witnesses gave replies which were full of unconscious pathos. One, a private still serving, said—in reply to the question, "I suppose you are beginning to think you should like to return home to your friends?"—"Yes, to what are left of them." Another private, an Irishman, replied to a question as to which he would prefer, going home on a pension, or entering Chelsea Hospital, "I should like to go home to my own country, and be buried in my father's grave;" and subsequently, "I have no home, no friends, or relations, except a brother; still I would like to be buried in my own country, and I have often prayed that I might be buried in my father's grave." His officers would no doubt have been surprised, could they have heard this old soldier speak thus. He admitted that, during his twenty-five years' service, he had received every sort of punishment; yet in this apparently reckless, battered veteran, there still beat a heart full of soft and tender memories. The general feeling of the majority of the men examined was, that if the pension were increased to, say, four shillings a day, they would prefer

being with their friends; but many are infirm, and have no friends. We therefore fully endorse the opinion of the committee, viz. "it is very certain that no increase of pension that could be given would compensate for the comforts, both in lodging, food, and medical attendance, afforded by the hospital to those who are without friends, and are incapacitated by infirmities from taking care of themselves."

LOVED AT LAST.

AND so he loves me, though they said
No lover e'er would come to me,
That I should ne'er be wooed or wed,
Or nurse a child upon my knee;
They were so sure that I should miss
The woman's heritage of bliss.

And I, too, in the sad gray hours,
When through low clouds no sunlight shone,
And when the slow September showers
Seemed nature's tears for summer gone,
I murmured with a long sad sigh,
"My summer also has gone by!"

But now I know that what to me
Seemed autumn rains were showers of spring;
Summer has come, and now I see
Love's sunlight brighten everything;
He says he loves me, and to-day
My year rolls back to early May.

How did it come? I ask of him:
He says my face is sweet and fair;
And yet to me these eyes seem dim,
And on this brow are lines of care:
But now these eyes shall yet be bright,
And once again this brow grow light.

He loves me! loves me! I repeat
The blest assurance every hour;
And now the wine of life is sweet,
That yesterday was sharp and sour:
Now I can drink, with spirit bold,
Love's nectar from a cup of gold.

I look through long slow-coming years,
Made by his love all bright and fair;
I look around through happy tears,
And see his image everywhere;
In his great love I breathe and live:
If it be sin, dear God, forgive.

It cannot be Since I have known
His love, God's love seems dearer too;
He has come near to me, and shown
What for the humblest he can do.
Life's fateful fingers intertwine
The human love with the divine.

Oh love, love, love! Oh blessed word,
That never did I understand
Till in my ear his voice I heard,
And felt the pressure of his hand:
No more I walk with eyes cast down,
I am his queen, love is my crown.

A CALIFORNIAN CONJURING TRICK.

A STORY.

NIGHT and day, for seven days and nights in every week, and fifty-two weeks in every year—that was the way that the gaming-houses carried on their business in California in the good old times, some

thirty years or so ago. Latterly, on the Rhine—even before victorious and pious Berlin had finally decided that the Berlin royal lotteries were the only form in which gambling could be tolerated—Sunday closing was enforced with very impartial rigour. And even now in the pleasant little principality where the black and red have found their last public European refuge, and which Nature seems to have thoughtfully constructed of the exact size required to hold the tables and their staff without further room for any disturbing influence, the cards cease to fall and the little ball to roll every night at twelve o'clock, and for one whole day in every year. We were not so particular in Frisco by any means. When it grew dark, we lighted the lamps. When we happened to look up for a moment from our game, and found that they were no longer required, we put them out again. That was the only difference ever made by the flight of time at the El Dorado.

A handsome establishment was that El Dorado, about the handsomest, if I remember rightly, that Frisco at that time could boast. Not that it was in any way palatial. The palatial days of Frisco had not then begun. But it was a good-sized room, with more attempt at ornament about it than was common in the architecture of the period, and costing perhaps in the way of rent something like two or three good houses in Lombard-street.

It must indeed be admitted that in those days the rent was the strong feature of your Friscan house. The fabric itself might leave something to be desired. True, there were advantages in it. If your house was—as it probably was—only one story high, you were saved all trouble in climbing stairs. If it consisted—as it probably would consist—of, at the utmost, a couple of rooms, let us say, to be liberal, a dozen feet square, why there you had everything under your hand, and might sling your luxurious Mexican hammock from one corner to the other and never stir from it unless you felt inclined. If it and its surroundings—walls, roof, floors, everything even to the ground on which it stood, and the plank pavement of the street outside—were all of thin dry wood, just a “box of matches” ready to take fire from the first stray spark of your pipe, you were at least saved the annoyance when it did take fire of having to think whether there was any possibility of putting it out again. Still with all these

points in its favour, it must be admitted that a San Franciscan mansion thirty years ago would have taxed the descriptive eloquence of the late Mr. George Robins. Fortunately—from a landlord's point of view—descriptive eloquence was not required. If you had a house to let you just mentioned casually, as its rent, the biggest number of dollars you could happen at the moment to call to mind, and the bargain was closed before you had time to add another cent.

The El Dorado stood, as you may suppose, in one of the best situations in the town, just down at the corner of the Plaza, that huge bare wilderness of dust or mud, like a Brobdingnagian drying-ground with only one pole left in the middle. That was the great liberty-pole. I don't quite know what a liberty-pole means by the way, though I have seen a good many of them. But whatever it may have meant, that liberty-pole of the Plaza had one association which marks it out in my mind to this day distinct from any other erection in all Frisco. You have “done” your Cologne, and your Rome, and your Naples, and all the rest of them of course, and can recall—rather vaguely, perhaps, but never mind that—the monuments of interest, cathedrals, churches, hôtels-de-ville, picture-galleries, statues, and what not, to which you were “personally conducted” in the course of that self-inflicted penance. Well, when you did your Frisco in those good old days—and they were good old days, mind you, from a Friscan point of view—you were not bothered with anything of that kind. The one claim to distinction to be put forward on behalf of any particular building, or monument, or what you will, was that So-and-so had been hanged there. I remember being puzzled at first to understand why a different door or window, or a fresh lamp or sign post, should have been selected in each case for carrying out the decrees of that unquestionable saviour of San Franciscan society, Mr. Justice Lynch. But I soon found that the selection was in most instances simply a “natural” one, determined solely by the eternal fitness for suspensory purposes of the first pole, lamp-post, door, window or otherwise that came to hand after the offender had been caught. Now to this golden rule the big liberty-pole was, I believe, the one solitary exception. Nobody had been hanged upon it. They had got a couple of offenders there once, caught close by in the very act of pilfering—we

didn't hang for minor offences, manslaughter and such like—and had swarmed the pole, and fixed the block, and rove fairly through it the slack ends of the two ropes already round the culprits' necks. But before they had been hauled halfway up, some sentimental patriot had shouted from the crowd a request "not to desecrate the liberty-pole," and the half-hanged offenders had been promptly lowered down and hurried off, ropes and all, to perfect their strangulation in some less sacred spot. But this is a digression. *Revenons à nos moutons*, flocking in to be shorn in the gaily-decorated, brilliantly-lighted, tobacco-befogged saloon of the El Dorado.

We were a roughish lot, I am afraid, at the El Dorado, and we looked it. There was a sprinkling of "stove-pipe" hats here and there of course, to say nothing of swallow-tailed coats, black pants, and satin vests. But, as a rule, our costume was rather picturesque than fashionable; its principal features being huge horseskin boots with the trousers tucked loosely into them, red flannel shirt more or less weatherstained, a ragged felt or Panama hat, and a chevelure free from any contamination of razor, brush, or comb. Not a promising-looking flock by any means, but with a marvellous yield of wool.

Six months and more some of these wild, red-shirted, hairy men would have been away on their claims, toiling from daybreak to dusk in drenching rain, and cutting wind and scorching sun, handling pick and shovel and cradle, hour after hour and day after day, with that fierce energy which knows neither relaxation nor respite, except such as comes perforce when friendly night makes further toil impossible. Nor even that sometimes. There were those who, when "pay-dirt" was rich or nuggets plentiful, and the fruitless labour perhaps of many weeks began to find its ample reward at last, could not find it in their hearts to succumb even to the darkness, but toiled madly on by flaring torch or blazing fire until pick and shovel fairly dropped from their worn-out hands, and the exhausted digger slept where he fell in the muddy trench, which looked in the gray morning light like some huge, self-dug grave.

And so at last the "pile" had been made, and the sheep had set off—without any previous ceremony of washing—to carry his ragged golden fleece to Frisco to be shorn.

I did not stay in Frisco long enough to be quite positive of the fact, but it certainly struck me that it was by the gentlemen in the swallow-tailed coats, black pants, and satin vests that this necessary operation was chiefly performed. The proprietors of the gaming-houses seemed all to be of the stove-pipe persuasion, and to them, of course, a considerable share of the booty fell. But they were not by any means the monopolists that the proprietors of our Continental kursaals are. *Trente-et-quarante* there was none. That is much too staid a dissipation for the stormy requirements of your Californian digger "on the burst." The roulette—its cylinder carefully guarded by strong wire defences against any excess of energy in the casting of the stakes—attracted a fair number of votaries, and the *monté-table* a still larger. But the richest fleeces seemed commonly to be falling at the small private tables, where little parties of four would dash through rubber after rubber of *euchre* under the admiring eyes of a small gallery of red shirts and Panama hats, and little handfuls of primitive dust or nuggets would follow the fortunes of the cards, without any need of the conventional aid of counters or cash. Some of these little tables are occupied exclusively by the red-shirted fraternity, and here the dust and the nuggets, or the dollars for which they have been exchanged, pass rapidly from hand to hand and back again, as cards vary or skill may tell. But there is a stovepipe or two at most of them, and whatever may be the fluctuations of the game, it seems to be but rarely that its owner rises a very serious loser.

There is another respect, too, in which the play-room of the El Dorado differs materially from those of Germany, Italy, or Switzerland. The decorous, almost solemn silence which reigns in these is in the former quite unknown. We trouble as little about company manners as about company clothes, and shout and laugh and swear with as ingenuous freedom, as though in the sacred privacy of our own pet gully a hundred miles away. Sometimes, in the warmth of argument, we find that mere words, even of the most comminatory description, fail to convey the full expression of our feelings, and then, perhaps, a "repeater" or two will come out and join in the discussion with considerable effect. It is easy, however, to distinguish the bark of a Colt or a Derringer from the popping of a champagne cork; and if you drop

quickly into the nearest vacant chair and "sit low," you will find yourself, after the first shot or two, in little comparative danger—unless, of course, they are fired at you. Even in such case, however, there is probably some previous warning in the shape of the exchange of at least a phrase or two, and all you have to do is to keep a careful eye upon the movements of your opponent—and fire first.

I think it was the very first time I ever set foot in the El Dorado, that I was an eyewitness of the strange scene which I am about to describe.

There was one man among the players that evening who had attracted my attention from the first. He was a tall, powerful fellow, standing in his mud-soiled, horse-skin boots, a full head higher than almost anyone in the room, and with a full blue eye and broad open face, with very much more of the Englishman about it than the Yankee. His once scarlet shirt was decidedly ragged and stained to almost every tint not to be found in the rainbow; his face, so much of it at least as was not hidden under a mighty light-brown beard, was burned almost to a brick colour, as were also his hands, torn and scarred by rough and reckless toil. But the big brown beard was carefully combed, the curly hair cropped short, the scarred hands not small indeed, but almost aristocratically well shaped. Altogether, despite a trim amazingly like that of the ruffian of some Adelphi melodrama, the big digger looked strangely like a gentleman, and attracted my observation from the first.

He came lounging up the room, a short black pipe tucked away in the corner of his mouth, his hands stuck carelessly in his broad gold-belt, where the polished butt of his Colt peeped significantly out above the bulging pockets, crammed to bursting with nuggets and dust, and on his head a three-hundred dollar Panama hat, brand-new, and forming a quaint contrast to the rest of his costume. In Frisco, in those days, your Panama hat was the one infallible mark of your dandy. Thence downwards you might get up in any fashion you might think becoming, or find advantageous to your comfort or your purse. So long as you had a first-class Panama hat you were all right.

Our tall friend's Panama was a real beauty, and, for the rest, he certainly had an air of doing as he darned pleased, with as easy a disregard for anything but his own pleasure as you could wish a big,

burly, good-natured man to possess. For that he was a thoroughly good-natured fellow was beyond all question. It was "writ large" all over him. As he took his way calmly through the thickest of the throng, his jovial face and beaming smile seemed to smooth his passage quite as effectually as his big shoulders forced it. He had a word and a jest for everyone, and when anything was said that tickled his risible faculties—not difficult of tickling—the great broad smile would break all over the sunburnt features, and the blue eyes would dance as merrily as any schoolboy's. Yet for all the transparent bonhomie of the man's face there was a stranger resolution about it too—it was a face that one could readily fancy growing on good occasion very hard and stern.

"Good bird to pluck," observed a Yankee at my elbow to a friend standing by, jerking his head in the direction of the stranger, and squirting half-a-pint or so of tobacco-juice into the nearest spittoon by way of emphasis to the remark.

The other followed the direction of the speaker's eye, looked at the new-comer carelessly for a moment or two with both eyes open, looked at him for another moment or two intently with one eye half shut, turned a mighty quid in one hollow cheek, added his contribution of tobacco-juice to the common stock, and replied with sententious gravity:

"Bad bird to peck."

Much to my satisfaction, the "bird" in question made his way as, though of set purpose, straight to the table by which I was standing. By this time his pipe was out, and, without removing it from the corner of his mouth, where it seemed as much a fixture as any of his teeth, he took a cake of tobacco from the breast of his red shirt, drew the ivory-handled bowie from its convenient resting-place in the top of his right boot, and began cutting up and rubbing a fresh supply, intently regarding the players the while.

Euchre is a rapid game, or was, as played out West in those days. Tap—tap—tap—tap; four little knuckle-raps upon the table, so closely following upon each other that they might have been given by a single over-zealous postman, and all four players have expressed their determination that clubs, at all events, shall not be the trump suit this deal. Before the dealer—and he is quick enough in his movements, too—has had time to turn the seven of clubs, whose pretensions to govern the

deal have been thus summarily rejected, a brief nasal grunt of "next" has proclaimed the eldest hand's exercise of his privilege in promoting spades to the vacant throne. As he speaks, he plays; as he plays—almost before his card has touched the board—the second follows suit. And so card follows card as swiftly as from the dealer's hands, and the game is over, and the cards swept together again and deftly shuffled—I never saw real artistic shuffling anywhere but in the West; no, not even in Rhineland—cut, dealt, and the game under way again in little more time than a deliberative player at home might take over a single card at whist, even without arousing the impatience of his fellow-sufferers.

Our new friend was evidently a connoisseur in euchre, and as he thrust the ivory bowie back into his boot, and rubbed the rich black shreds round and round in his horny palm, I could see the blue eyes twinkle, and the great wavy masses of hair about the mouth just stirred by the faint suggestion of a smile.

And our friend was right. The "team" before us was a good one, about as good as I have often seen. I rather "fancied myself" at euchre in those days, and could appreciate first-class play when I saw it; but had I been invited to "cut in" among such very "straight, squinting gunners" as these, I shouldn't, in the words of a lamented Yankee friend—afterwards, I regret to say, "spoilt" by Mr. Justice Lynch for playing euchre a little too well—"I shouldn't have thought twice about it. No, sirree! I should ha' clar'd right out, fust time o' asking."

Our new friend was less diffident. As he stuffed the fresh supply into his pipe—without the least thinking it necessary to remove the latter from his mouth for the purpose—I could see that the very fingers thus agreeably employed were itching to be at the good work. Nor was it long before they were gratified. Play was even enough, but the cards had been running crookedly, and, as luck would have it, altogether against the weaker purse. The newly-filled pipe was hardly well alight, before the player nearest to us had "had enough," and retired with his empty gold belt from the contest. His late partner looked up in search of a new ally, caught the eye of my big friend, recognised him as a kindred spirit, and was content.

"In, old hoss?" was the brief question that promptly followed.

"You bet," was the yet briefer answer. And with the fourth puff from the newly-lighted pipe, the cards were in the new-comer's hands, and he had already "ordered-up" a knave of diamonds, with as calm an indifference as though there were naught but "right bowers" in the pack. His partner's eyes sparkled. He did not seem to have the slightest apprehension as to the result, though he himself, as eldest hand, had already "passed" the dangerous card, the absorption of which into the adversary's hand would ensure him at least one certain trick out of the three which would suffice to "euchre" them. The almost imperceptible pause, as of doubt, which he had himself made before administering the negative rap to the table, though enough to signify alike to his partner and to the opponent on his left hand a certain power of support, which must needs to some extent encourage the one and intimidate the other, had not been pronounced enough for any danger of misleading. There was no fear. The new comrade had cards as well as skill, and that sadly diminished little "pile" at his elbow would now begin to swell again.

Which it did. Play and cards combined carried all before them, and before long one of his opponents—a player "for the pot," not for the game—had had enough of it, and had surrendered his place, leaving a considerable portion of his previous winnings behind him. Brownbeard laughed jovially as he went.

"Clean skinned?" he enquired, glancing up at the departing player, as he applied himself to the cutting of a fresh supply of cavendish.

The seceder shook his head, and acknowledged, a trifle gruffly, that he had "a bit o' hide left."

"Wal," replied Brownbeard, "the air's cold outside. Take a bit o' 'intment just to make th' ha'r sprout." And as he spoke he gathered up a goodly handful of gold pieces from the heap beside him, and held them out for his late opponent's acceptance.

The man laughed, shook his head, gave the other a mighty slap on the shoulder, and answered less gruffly than before, though still with quite as much earnest as jest in his tone:

"Reckon we'll meet again 'fore long, old hoss, and then by thunder I'll raise your ha'r, ef it aren't glued on."

"Bully for you!" rejoined the other, tranquilly. "Guess there's more down Bluenose Gully yonder;" and the game

being now re-formed, took up his cards and continued the play.

I watched him a little while longer, and then went away to dinner. After dinner I went to the Jenny Lind Theatre, and on my way home I looked in at the El Dorado again.

Brownbeard was still there and playing away as gaily and as brilliantly as ever. But somehow luck seemed to have changed, and he had evidently been losing considerably. The general aspect of affairs too had somehow altered. Brownbeard's partner was gone, and in his place was another digger "on the burst," very much of the same type. But their two opponents were of an altogether different description. The one on his left hand belonged to the stovepipe fraternity: a narrow-faced, sallow-complexioned man with thin lips, a slightly-hooked nose, hay-coloured hair and goatee, and a pair of keen, green-gray eyes, sunk deep under the brows and set close together. His partner was chiefly noticeable for the extreme newness of his clothes, which somehow, though of orthodox cut enough—red shirt, cord trousers, big boots, Panama and all complete—seemed hardly to sit naturally upon him. His hands too, deft enough with the cards, showed no signs of recent toil. A new arrival, perhaps, freshly rigged out and getting rid of superfluous "lumber" before starting on his first trip up country.

If that, however, had been his object, he had failed in carrying it out. A goodly share of the huge pile I had left before dinner at Brownbeard's side had now drifted across the corner of the table and lay under the sleeve of the bright red shirt. Brownbeard, however, seemed to trouble himself remarkably little about it. Good cards or bad, luck or no luck, let the golden tide flow or ebb as it pleased, he played on with just as much coolness, and, as it seemed, with just as much zest and enjoyment too, under the one condition as under the other. We were not particularly stoical in California in those days. When the game went well with us we laughed aloud and slapped our heavy palm upon the table till the gold pieces danced again. When luck went against us we cursed it freely, in no undertone, and banged the table with our clenched fist, as though to punish it for betraying us. We had many virtues, no doubt, but reticence was not among them. I make no doubt but that, had Brownbeard been so minded, he would have given ex-

pression to his satisfaction or his annoyance with as primitive a disregard of convention as any red-shirt there. But it was very plain that here, for once at all events, was a man who played "for the play." The gold pieces, whose movements to and fro marked its fluctuations, were to him so many counters. As he himself had said, there were plenty more in Bluenose Gully, wherever that might be. When these were gone he would carry his brawny arms back there again, and dig a fresh supply.

It really seemed as though, from the pecuniary point of view, the spectators took more interest in the game than the player himself. Indeed, so keen was the interest evidently felt by some of them that my attention was involuntarily caught by it.

Then I began to realise that the "gallery" was as much changed in constitution as the "team" of players. Where I was standing, indeed, there was much the same little gathering of cleaned-out players, loafers, expectant cutters-in, and so forth, that was to be found around any table where anything exceptional in the way of play was going on. But round the player on Brownbeard's left had congregated a little knot of men who, without any outward sign of recognition, seemed somehow to me to be his friends. One thing at all events was very certain. Their position rendered it next to impossible for anyone else to overlook his hand.

Perhaps it was this fact that gave me a curiosity to see it. I don't think there was then the smallest suspicion in my mind, though when I come to look back upon the play, the singular opportuneness with which the stovepipe gentleman continually overtrumped Brownbeard's best tricks might very well have aroused it in a looker-on. I fancy, however, it was merely the instinctive desire to see what is hidden from other people which led me round behind the little group, which fenced in the black-coated player's chair. I happen to stand something over six feet in height, and could see over the barrier comfortably enough.

I had not been standing there five minutes before my suspicions were unmistakably aroused. Where the card had come from I could not attempt to say, but I could almost have sworn that the "left bower," with which Blackcoat had just knocked over Brownbeard's ace, was not in his hand when it was dealt. A few minutes more and the same thing occurred, though even now I could not be absolutely

certain of my facts; and my curiosity being now thoroughly aroused, I set myself steadily to watch Blackcoat's cards. In four more deals I had made myself sure. The cards dealt to him had been, as I had carefully noted, the ace and nine of clubs, which were trumps, and the king, queen, and seven of diamonds. The ace of trumps had taken Brownbeard's queen, and he had led out the seven of diamonds, which in its turn had fallen to an ace from the eldest hand. Trumps were then again led, and again the opportunity "left bower"—i.e. in this instance, of course, the knave of spades—had beaten the king with which Brownbeard would else have won the trick. There was assuredly no knave of spades among the cards originally dealt to Blackcoat. I glanced down enquiringly at those still remaining in his hand. The queen of diamonds was gone.

What decision I should have come to as to mentioning my discovery I cannot say, for at the same instant my attention was diverted by a little crash upon the table, and turning my eyes I saw that the pipe had fallen suddenly from Brownbeard's tightly-closed mouth. For the moment he did not seem to observe what had happened, and it was someone else's hand which came down upon the little lump of lighted tobacco which was quietly burning a hole in the table. Then he seemed to recover himself, and turning his head with a laugh spat out some pieces of broken clay. He had bitten the end of the pipe clean off.

Had he discovered what was going on? I could not help fancying he had; and though his manner remained unchanged, it seemed to me that, even as he played, he was studying the faces, not of his black-coated opponent only, but of the little knot by whom he was surrounded. Once I found his eyes for a moment resting silently upon my face, and, as he withdrew them, he smiled with what seemed very like an air of satisfaction.

Presently the little occurrence above described took place again; the "right bower" being the one so opportunely produced this time. Again I caught Brownbeard's eye; and now there was an unmistakable question in it. I answered by an almost imperceptible nod, and he smiled again. But a spark flashed out from under the thick brown eyebrows, which recalled to my mind the epigrammatic little conversation of eight or ten hours back. He

had certainly, so far, been a good bird to pluck. Was he now going to show himself an equally bad bird to peck?

"Play, stranger?" he enquired, addressing me across the table as I put this question to myself.

"A little," I answered, somewhat reluctantly, for, truth to tell, I was not too anxious to be mixed up in one of these "difficulties," of which I had hitherto managed to keep clear; and which, at times, involved more promiscuous shooting than was quite good for the health of uninterested bystanders.

"Then just work the cradle for me a bit," he continued; "my legs are cramped, and I'll take a spell for a hand or two."

I objected, with prudent modesty, that I was "not good enough."

"You bet!" he answered, laughingly. "Thar's my pile—what's left of it. You go on that, and pouch half the plunder. You won't slop over the dust much worse than I've been doing, any way—not with yer eyes shut."

And certainly for some time I did not "slop over the dust" at all. On the contrary, Brownbeard's sadly-diminished pile now began by degrees to swell again. Perhaps Blackcoat was alarmed, and, playing on the square, I think I was a match for him. At all events, for the next half hour the balance of success was decidedly on our side; and, during that time, Brownbeard, who had replaced his broken pipe with a cheroot, stood quietly behind me, smoking and watching the game with as much unconcern, as though it had been my own money I had been playing with instead of his. The only difference in his demeanour was that, whereas before he had been almost silent, he now kept up a perfect stream of "chaff."

I saw our two opponents exchange glances and grin at one another. I could not help asking myself whether the bitter beer—at three dollars the bottle!—which had been pouring pretty freely down Brownbeard's throat all the evening might not be producing its effect. Most sincerely did I hope not, especially when, by-and-by, our opponents' confidence seemed to revive, and that opportune "bower" again made its appearance on my left hand. Thrice more it happened without the slightest notice being taken by Brownbeard, who rattled on as merrily as ever, and who had now turned the conversation—if conversation it could be

called, which was almost exclusively kept up by himself—upon conjuring tricks. I was beginning to think that I might as well back quietly out of the affair, when suddenly, just as the cards had been freshly dealt, and the new hand was about to begin, he struck in with:

"Say, lads! Just hold up your hands a bit, till I show you somethin'!"

He spoke so naturally, that even the rascal on my left did not for the moment take the alarm.

"What are you up to now?" he asked, half surlily.

"Wal," answered Brownbeard quietly, "I'll show you. It's a little trick I invented myself when I was snowed up three weeks down to Bluenose yonder, all alone with a pack o' cards and a keg of Bourbon. Look hyar! Clubs are trumps, aren't they?"

"Don't take much conjuring to spot that," replied a bystander jeeringly.

"That's so," rejoined Brownbeard. "And 'tain't thar the trick comes in. Look hyar, now. I'll go five to one with any cuss here present, that not one of you three has got the 'right bower.' My Injun hasn't, any way," and he took the cards from my hand and threw them on the table as he spoke.

There was a silence as the three players looked at one another, but no one answered.

My own eyes were fixed upon Blackcoat, and I could see that, at the ominous words "right bower," a fear came upon him, and he turned sallow than before. His unoccupied hand too, hitherto lying idly on the table, was lifted quickly, and I involuntarily half rose from my chair to be ready to slip aside from the expected shot.

But Brownbeard's eyes were on him, and, if he had really meditated anything of the kind, he abandoned the idea. The hand just rested a moment or two in the bosom of the close-fitting black satin waistcoat, and returned again to its resting-place on the table. I fancied he looked relieved when it had done so. I fancied, too, that I could hear Brownbeard laugh under his breath behind my chair.

"Don't think much o' that for a trick," said the player in the brand-new suit, who also had been evidently uneasy, and appeared now considerably relieved.

"Perhaps I'll better it," replied Brownbeard, leaning over my shoulder, and quietly spreading out the remaining cards,

faces downwards, with his left hand, but without taking his eyes off the man in the black coat. "See, now! Right bower's somewhar hereabouts, I guess—or should be. I'll go ten to one—in slugs—with any cuss hyar present, that I plug a hole slick through it, whar it lays—fust shot."

There was a profounder silence than before. Everyone seemed now to understand that there was something wrong. The man in black turned livid, and half rose from his chair.

But it was too late! Even as he moved, there was a sudden flash, a sharp report just at my ear, and with one stifled cry the man threw up his arms, and fell forward on the table—dead.

In an instant, a dozen repeaters had leaped from their lurking-places, and were pointed menacingly towards us. But Brownbeard never flinched. Throwing upon the table the yet smoking pistol, with five of its six chambers still loaded, he folded his arms and stood quietly facing the excited throng unarmed.

"No hurry, boys," he said in a clear, firm voice; "no hurry. Ef I've done more'n I said, thar's plenty o' room here to fix a rope. Jest turn that carrion over, will you?"

The little knot of confederates around the dead man's seat had disappeared, but a couple of diggers raised the body by the shoulders, and laid it back against the rail of the chair. Then, at a word from the quiet figure still standing with folded arms at my side, one of them thrust his hand into the bosom of the satin waistcoat, and drew forth a card, soaked with blood, and with a small hole through one corner, but still distinguishable. It was the knave of clubs—the missing "right bower"—and the avenging bullet had, in truth, "plugged a hole through it," on its way to the dead swindler's heart!

There was no need for further enquiry. The threatening repeaters went back to their hiding-places again. Not one among them but would have been used promptly enough to the same end. In less than ten minutes, all trace of the affray was removed, and the play was in full swing again. Neither Brownbeard or I, however, felt inclined for more that evening, and we strolled homewards together. Next "fall" I spent a month with him, partly at his hut in Bluenose Gully, partly "b'ar-hunting" among the wild country, some fifty miles farther up towards the mountains. And a glorious fellow I found him.

He was not much of a correspondent, however, as you may suppose, and I have never heard of or seen him since. But I shall not soon forget his Californian conjuring trick.

STRANGE WATERS.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON,

AUTHOR OF "OLYMPIA," "PEARL AND EMERALD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER II. AT HOME.

CELIA'S coming home, however, was an old story now—years old. She was once more a Deepweald limpet, with merely the brand of the Continent to distinguish her from her fellows. She needed some sort of distinction; for, with a strange but far from peculiar form of perversity, the people of Deepweald, such as the Swanns and others, resolutely refused to see any change in Celia, unless it might be a little for the worse. She had always been awkward, shy, and plain; so she was bound to be awkward, shy, and plain all her days. But of course having been on the Continent gave her a *raison d'être*, and her fellow-townpeople were the less inclined to grudge it to her in that she had no other, and was brought into rivalry with nobody.

But though this gave her a badge of distinction in the place which she, by force of early habit, regarded—always next to Lindenheim—as the capital of the world, the sky-rocket of the conservatorium, for such she had become, had come down like a stick most lamentably. And she seemed likely to be stuck like a real limpet in Deepweald until that deaf fanatic, her father, had finished the last chord of his score. And when would that be? He had been at it for something like twenty years; and he still talked of a few years more. And until those few years more were over to the last hour, and the final chord ready for action, the voice of Celia was to be kept out of sight like a buried treasure over which, in legendary times, dragons were set to keep guard. She was not even to let herself be heard as a singing mistress—not even in Deepweald, where one must be heard sing very loudly to be heard of half-a-dozen miles away.

Was it genius in the organist, or was it lunacy? Celia, as a child, had looked on her father as the very incarnation of music; but Lindenheim had considerably

modified her views; she knew not what to believe. Public opinion was more decided. John March had never been worth a halfpenny an hour as a teacher, and, in point of fact, his deafness did not make a farthing's difference in his value; but nevertheless an overtly deaf music-master was a contradiction in terms, and Celia had not been at home a day before she found that the very small salary of the cathedral organist was all that the two together had to depend upon for a living. It was true that John March as yet had no professional rival in the place, but it was equally true that all his pupils had left him, and that a rival might be looked for any day in the natural course of things. And then the organist's pittance, however highly he might be thought of by the Palace and the Deanery, was precarious, as it became manifest that his deafness was past cure.

Surely it was time that Celia, fired with new-born filial pity for that fallen tyrant, to whom she was really more closely bound by unconscious sympathy than by emotional affection; surely it was time that she should turn her education to some use, and, if he would not allow her to defy fortune as a concert singer, become herself his friendly rival. The same idea occurred to Mrs. Swann, who called on her within two days of her return, and volunteered to start her effectively. But to every such suggestion the organist turned, both metaphorically and literally, two deaf ears. He never gave a reason to anybody but Celia; and so obstinate was he that the few, who wished to be his friends, set down his conduct as sheer lunacy, and the score as a monomania. And, rightly or wrongly, most people of the most ordinary common sense would naturally come to the same conclusion.

"It's odd," was Mr. Swann's expressed opinion, "that a clever fellow like March should let that poor girl of his starve rather than let her go governessing. That isn't pride, to my mind. It isn't pride, when the wolf comes to the door, to ask him to dinner. It's a case for two doctors and the county asylum, to my mind. Poor Celia, I always had a sort of a kindness for that girl! What's to become of them when March loses his place, I'm hanged if I know. I wish we could do something for them; I'd give her a stool in my own office, if she was a boy."

"I might give her that old polonaise

thing of Bessy's," said Mrs. Swann meditatively. "But then she does pitchfork her things on so."

"Does she? I thought she looked quite neat and nice when I saw her to-day."

"Yes, that's how men see things. She was always like that—pitchforked on, I mean. It's bred in the bone. However, we'll have her to dinner on Sundays, and welcome."

"A growing girl wants more dinners than one a week," said Mr. Swann. "However, half a loaf's better than no bread."

But, though Celia was asked to dinner on Sunday—without her father—and though the invitation was twice repeated, she did not go. She was beginning, after the first shock, to think; and a girl, fresh from life, and triumph, and Lindenheim, may be acquitted of unfilial unselfishness for shuddering, when she thought, at the desert of life that lay before her. Even she, though she did not breathe such treason even to herself, was ceasing to believe in the completion of that interminable score. She had learned what the faculty of composing means, and how the greatest works have not demanded lifetimes. And yet she did not practically feel that he was the victim to an insane delusion. And so her life lay plain before her—to sacrifice herself to a dream, because it was all that her father had left to live for; to obey him, because his terrible misfortune exacted self-devotion more legitimately than his tyranny had done; and to give him a little of the human affection, that for the sake of a dream he had thrown away.

But obedience implied being idle, and the patient waiting for an end that was never to come. Happily for her, she had not one atom of ambition in her whole composition—or unhappily, because, if she had, she would have been driven into wholesome rebellion, and have refused to sacrifice her life for a craze, or, at best, a whim. But at last, as time went on, and when the last pupil left, a greater incentive arose to active rebellion even than healthy ambition. The wolf was at the door. John March had not learned business in Deepweald cathedral, nor had Celia studied domestic economy at Lindenheim.

And so it happened that, for old friendship's sake, she consented to give instruction to Bessy Gaveston. She told her father, but could never make out whether he understood it or no, or whether he made use of his deafness as a means of compromise between yielding at last to

the supposed necessity of supporting what he monstrously called life, and his determination to give no express consent to a breach of the law that he had made. At any rate he would not understand; and Celia was obliged to take silence for assent, for lack of any other. No doubt the organist argued, If my score needs the sacrifice even of my will, let even my will go.

It was in this melancholy condition of home affairs that Celia so unexpectedly met, even in the High-street of Deepweald, where a stranger was a ten days' wonder, Walter Gordon.

However much she had fallen into the background of his mind, he was as freshly in the foreground of hers as after the walk to Waaren. She believed in the eternity of friendship, even though educated at Lindenheim, where loves and friendships are as the lives of butterflies—no less brief as no less bright and many-coloured. Was he not the only real man she had ever really known? For she had been faithful at Lindenheim to her pledge, the young men of Deepweald did not count, and her father was only an incarnate organ-pipe transformed into an incarnate score. He had given her life; and if anything more that he had given her was as yet but a mere thin phantom, those thin phantoms are notoriously strong. Seeing her thus suddenly and unexpectedly had brought back all Lindenheim even to him. But to her? No wonder that for full five minutes the English sun began to shine in German, and the perfume of old days blew back. All old days have their special fragrance, and with Celia they were violet-odoured. Once more she was the shy and awkward new girl walking beside a magnificent stranger across the borders of a new world—a world where that Moloch, art itself, was nowhere.

She had dismissed him, with almost needless lack of encouragement; but she could not help wondering whether something more than mere chance had not brought him to Deepweald, and, if so, how long the chain of chances was to be, or whether it was to end barrenly where it had begun. She felt troubled and excited—but the trouble was no pain. Was it Herr Walter's mission always to turn up, at all sorts of sudden times and places, when she most needed him? If so, life would not look quite so barren and unsympathetic after all. On the contrary, there would be many an oasis in the desert for her.

But she looked for nothing immediate or tangible. And she had no presentiment, even when the girl, with her wages in arrear, announced a gentleman, name unknown, to see Miss March. She assumed it would be Mr. Gaveston, and her heart gave a leap when she thought of a possible cheque. It was Herr Walter. She had given him to understand that he was not to call, but his disobedience did not displease her. What could be more natural that he should call on his most intimate Lindenheim friend?

"I suppose you were hardly expecting to see me here, Fräulein Celia? But you see, where you are is Lindenheim."

Celia smiled and sighed. She liked the speech; but she was only too sure that where she was, was not Lindenheim.

"I'm staying at Hinchford—Lord Quorne's—and I've been waiting for a chance of coming over again. We're friends, aren't we?"

"I hope so," said Celia.

"Then let's make believe we are at Lindenheim. You used to tell me everything there, you know, and I used to tell you everything—or any way, most things. I don't think I used to tell you every time I went to the Stadt Dresden, or how much beer I used to drink there. Well, we're wiser now. I want to know if you are really settled down to teaching in Deepweald? I think I might be of use to you with Lady Quorne."

He began to find her really very lovely to look at, and not only from a painter's point of view—which, however, was not then so opposed to general notions of beauty, as it has since become. He was not a Deepweald man, and therefore not bound to believe that all people are branded at ten years old with an ineffaceable label.

"I teach Mrs. Gaveston," she said.

"Nobody else? Do you know, I can't imagine your settling down here. It's the old business of the racer and the dust-cart. I suppose you mean to go into the profession some day?"

"No," said Celia, beginning to feel that it was less easy to give Herr Walter her whole confidence now than it had been at Lindenheim. "At least—at least, not for a long time."

"A long time? Why should the world have to wait so long for the Lindenheim Nightingale—the Nightingale aus England, you used to be called there?" He added the postscript because he felt that somehow he had made a mistake in paying her a conventional compliment, and the refer-

ence to the Lindenheim phrase turned the edge; he was certainly learning a little truth about womankind and its ways from his elaborate studies of Mademoiselle Clari—at any rate he had reached the second letter of the alphabet, which is—never pay compliments except in war.

"Perhaps never," said Celia, without the sign of a sigh.

"But there is a perhaps, you see."

"Yes—I did tell you everything at Lindenheim. My father wants me to appear in his great work. I must wait till that is done."

"Well, that sounds all right. Why do you say 'perhaps never?'"

"I mean—I mean—well, it is a long time since we were at Lindenheim."

"You call it long ago—yesterday?"

They were following very divergent trains of feeling; and they were landing in the wrong places, for in truth it was to her that Lindenheim was of yesterday, to Walter that it was long ago. But then she was feeling an instinct of reticence about all things, unconsciously aware that Mr. Gordon had ceased to be quite the same Herr Walter, and that she had certain instincts of hero-worship to hide; he felt that however she had changed, she was still the very same Celia, and was making him melt back into the Herr Walter that she was feeling he had ceased to be.

"I'm afraid I haven't done my duty in looking after you, Fräulein Celia," he said, with the real smile aus Lindenheim. "I remember all about your father, and," he added without the smile, "I have heard. Don't you know how I sympathise with you—how I want to help you—if I may? Why else did you think I had come?" He held out his hand; she took it frankly. They never knew from that moment how far apart they had been within two moments ago.

"Then you know why I am here," said Celia.

"Well—no. That's just what I don't know. With your gifts you could make a living for both of you—you might make a fortune."

"You don't know my father. He would see me in my grave rather than enter on a career—except in one way. And then—I'm afraid you don't know me. I might teach a little—but—no: I should never sing in public. I'm——"

"What?"

"A coward, Herr Walter. I nearly sank under the floor when I sang at Lindenheim."

"Ah! before friends and enemies? But you'd be bold enough before strangers?"

"No; that's just what I shouldn't be. That's why I'm content to wait for years. I want to learn to be brave."

"By not going into the water till you've learned to swim. But do you mean your father's work is not to be finished for years?"

"He says so."

"But what can it be, in the name of immensity? An opera? An oratorio?"

"I don't know. He doesn't even tell me. He locks it up, and calls it the score."

Walter's face fell. The genius had impressed a man the more, and of a different order from the Swanns, with an idea of his lunacy.

"And you—you," he said, his eagerness waking up at the thought of a real piece of injustice, "you are devoting your life to humour—to help—the craze—the idea——"

"Of my father," said Celia, simply, "who is deaf, and is growing old, and has nobody to believe in him but me."

Walter flushed more crimson than Celia at Waaren.

"I see," he said. "But, all the same, it is a shame. He is sacrificing you and robbing the world. Celia—it never will be finished, that score. I remember, you told me the first day I ever saw you—you remember?—that even then he had been at it for years. Such works last men their lives, and are never born even at the end."

Celia's face was not given to express obstinacy. But it did now; and it was answer enough, without her saying:

"It shall not fail for any fault of mine. He lives for this work, and has made me live for it too. I must not break his heart, Herr Walter."

Walter did not say, "I should like to break his head," he only thought so. He felt very angry. It is true Celia had been practically out of his thoughts for years; but here was a new experience of her, and he knew not which was the stronger cause for righteous indignation, the culpable lunacy of a self-conceited organist, or the obstinate determination on the part of Celia to sacrifice herself on such an altar. After all, had he not constituted himself Celia's guardian? And now was he not bound to be? What were the tiny perils of Liundenheim to those of Deepweald?

They did not speak another word for more than a minute—that is to say, for

what seemed five. Celia was stubbornly feeling; Walter was thinking. And he saw the life that must lie before her as plainly as she could picture it, and with greater effect, for he did not see the infinite pity that lay at the root of her devotion, and made it the less bitter. He only saw the blank barrenness. He had never yet seen the organist; but he painted him in the air as an exaggerated development of the Genius—genius as recognised at Liundenheim—only petrified by provinciality and age. Celia, he was convinced, only wanted ambition and self-assertion to gain name and fame—unless, indeed, she married, and then, of course, Walter would be relieved of his duty. And, in his new impulse of rebellion against injustice, he did not wish to be relieved.

Suddenly he heard a deep voice—"Celia!"

The organist's voice had grown rather harsher of late years. But it was still resonant with its effect of narrow power. Walter almost started. John March at the same time saw a stranger, and stared. Walter did not openly stare, though Celia's father resembled little enough the picture he had drawn.

"Neither genius nor madman," he thought. "A fanatic—that is worst of all. Poor girl!"

The organist carried no trumpet. Celia wrote something for him in pencil on a slip of paper.

"Walter Gordon!" he exclaimed brusquely; "Walter Gordon!"

Walter bowed. "And a deaf fanatic," he thought. "One who is shut up alone with a dream! Poor girl! She must be saved from this, anyhow."

Celia looked at him slightly but openly, as much as to say, "Go." He wished to remain, but all the chivalry in him was aroused, and he obeyed. He was twenty years old again. He had never expected to find in Celia a slave because she was a heroine. And somehow the father had thrown light upon the daughter—he was throwing himself after an idea, and she seemed capable of doing the same. His knowledge of womankind was beginning to be at sea with a vengeance; what with Clari's suggestions of unexplored depths of passion, and Celia's of unsuspected force of will, he seemed to have been fancying himself sliding on smooth ice, and to have just discovered it to be hot lava.